SVL NEWSLETTER

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SVL REPORT

SVL Newsletter is the freely distributed companion publication of **SVL Report**

SVLN and **SVLR** are published by:

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Kronenburgstraat 110
B-2000 Antwerpen
Belgium

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Presentation of Two New Publications Dedicated to the Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Object Reports

Aims and Scope of the Publication Project

Why investigate UFO reports ?

After many years of active involvement in an area of research that is desperately trying to achieve a scientific status, some members of the SVL* team put their heads together to evaluate the present state of UFO research and to see what could be done. They came to the following conclusions:

- The UFO phenomenon is an important phenomenon, regardless of whether it constitutes a new phenomenon or is sufficiently explainable by current scientific knowledge.

  Its importance resides in the mere fact that the phenomenon has its own history and continues to receive world-wide attention. The controversy whether or not a new physical "unknown" is involved is still alive. All over the world UFO groups as well as sectarian movements continue to confuse the public with their unfounded claims that UFOs are evidence of extra-terrestrial visitations to our planet.

- The "UFO patrimonium" (i.e. the thousands of eye-witness' accounts in the files of UFO groups, private investigators, government agencies and official research groups) contains much original, and often relevant information pertaining to rare natural phenomena and eccentric psychological behaviour.

  It is important to bring this information to the attention of the concerned scientific disciplines.

  At the same time, a possibility remains that in isolated, hitherto unsolved cases, where sufficient data is available, a phenomenon exists, or a process is at work, that is not yet understood by science.

- The UFO community has never succeeded in establishing a scientifically acceptable, standardized methodology for the analysis of the data it collects, nor has it been able to provide a generally accepted definition for the label "UFO".

  Moreover, UFO researchers tend to work with data emanating from sources with varying credibility and describing events that may have their origin in very different stimuli.

Why a series of new publications ?

The above conclusions incited us to start a new publication project.

The basic idea behind SVL Reports and SVL Newsletter is: on the one hand to provide UFO researchers with the necessary information for a better understanding of the human- and physical sciences and, on the other hand, to provide scientists with well-documented and verifiable information about the physical and psycho-sociological implications of UFO reports.

Whereas SVL Reports will deal with one specific aspect of the phenomenon at a time, SVL Newsletter will contain a letter section as well as details on how to order newly published reports and all pertinent new information about already published reports. Both, reports and newsletter, will be published irregularly, depending on the material that reaches SVL.

Why submit a manuscript to SVL ?

The Editorial Board is convinced that SVL Report and SVL Newsletter will offer a welcome opportunity to those researchers of anomalous claims who want to see their investigative results published and discussed in an independent publication, free from speculation and edited in an academic style.

There are four specific advantages in submitting manuscripts to SVL:

* SVL Report offers an opportunity to publish lengthy papers, which cannot usually be published in a journal (because of their large number of pages) or book (because of their technical style, not likely to appeal to a wide public).

  Untill now, most authors had to rely on UFO journals to publish detailed studies, which often meant they had to be spread over several issues. The only alternative was to edit their scripts personally and arrange private publication. This too often meant that good content suffered from poor presentation.

* SVL guarantees free publicity through the companion SVL Newsletter which will carry an announcement as well as order information for every report. The newsletter will be mailed to researchers and organizations in many different parts of the world. Editors will be asked to publish an announcement in their own publication.

* SVL offers the authors a chance to participate in the edition, distribution and discussion of the report that will carry their contribution.

  Edition: Ideas on presentation, illustrations and page order will be discussed prior to publication. Proofs will allow the author to suggest changes in the script during the editing process.

  Distribution: On request, authors will be send a list of names and addresses of the people who ordered the report that carries their manuscript. Authors can also obtain a copy of the mailing-list we use for the newsletter and suggest other names for inclusion.

  Discussion: Authors will automatically be kept posted about any serious comment, critique or additional information concerning their published manuscripts. The freely distributed SVL Newsletter will provide the forum for international discussion.

* Authors will receive two free copies of the SVL Report that carries their manuscript. Contributing authors receive one free copy of the report.

In supplying manuscripts we ask authors to consult SVL's "Instructions to Authors" which they will find on the following pages.

Information on how to obtain the first SVL Report can be found in the second newsletter, which will be mailed to you in the course of the following months.

SVL needs your orders and manuscripts to support the inititiative.

Thank you !

Editor-in-Chief,
Wim VAN UTRECHT

Associate Editor,
Ronny BLOMME

Managing Editor,
Henry KAMPHERBEEK

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* SVL was founded in 1979 by the Belgian researcher Jacques BONABOT as the Flemish sister-organization of the Groupement pour l'Etude des Sciences d'Avant-Garde (GESAG : Leopold II-laan 28, B-8000 Bruges, Belgium).

Since 1986, SVL, which stands for Studiegroep voor Vreemde Luchtverschijnselen (Group for the Study of Strange Aerial Phenomena) has worked independently from any other group or organization. Its main purpose is to collect and investigate alleged UFO experiences.

Instructions to Authors

Introduction

Some 35 years ago, United States Air Force Captain Edward J. RUPPELT coined the term "Unidentified Flying Object". From 1951 to 1953 Captain RUPPELT was in charge of two consecutive USAF investigative programs : Project Grudge and Project Blue Book. Both research projects were established to evaluate the thousands of sightings of "mysterious aircraft" that had been repored since the second half of the forties. The objects described were until then referred to as "flying saucers" and caused great concern in the United States. It did not take long before similar reports emanated from all corners of the world.

For four decades now, "UFOs" have been a point of discussion between scientists and "UFO experts", between "UFO experts" and cultists. Countless books and magazines have been dedicated to the problem, with several authors referring to UFOs as the greatest scientific mystery of our time. Worldwide media coverage contributed to the "popularity" of the phenomenon, whereas the link between these bizarre stories and science-fiction phantasies made it almost impossible to gain scientific attention to what was going on.

Nowadays, the UFO problem is no better off. The absence of uniform terminology, standardized methodology and competent evaluation, means that so-called "UFO" files in reality contain a mixture of cases, emanating from sources with varying credibility and describing a wide variety of not necessarily unidentifiable - and not necessarily inter-related - phenomena.

Over the years, a handful of investigators of UFO reports have tried to introduce a workable definition for the term U.F.O. They failed because most of their fellow-researchers had

their personal reasons for labeling this or that case as "UFO". Some use the label whenever mention is made of a curious apparition in the sky (cultists, but also newspapermen, tend to act in this way) while others refer to UFOs only when a case is left unsolved after detailed examination. But then again, what is considered as a detailed examination by the UFO investigator is not always acceptable as such in the eyes of the scientific community.

In short, most UFO researchers disagree, sometimes unconsciously, about the meaning of the label UFO. They do however agree about one thing, namely that the key-words that constitute the initial word are no longer in accordance with the characteristics of the data collected for investigation.

So the first initial stands for "unidentified", but unidentified to whom ? To the witness ? The cultist ? The UFO investigator ? Or to current scientific knowledge ?

The second initial stands for "flying", whereas the majority of interesting cases concern reports of phenomena that are said to have occurred on ground level.

And finally we have the expression "object" which too strongly suggests the presence of a solid construction, and does not seem to apply to the numerous reports of luminous bodies that suggest plasma-like phenomena rather than solid objects.

To avoid more confusion, contributors to SVL publications are asked to call the reported phenomena by their true name, i.e. dependent on the description offered by the concerned witnesses (for example "pulsating light", "metallic-looking object", "entity", etc...). They should also keep in mind that any witness can be mistaken in his or her description or may even be a downright liar. Therefore authors should not refrain from using expressions such as "according to", "the witness said that", etc... In any case, the label "UFO" should be avoided as much as possible.

Similarly, contributing authors should be referring to "UFO reports" instead of "UFOs" when applicable. By the expression "UFO report" we understand:

Any statement describing a confrontation with unusual objects, luminous phenomena, entities and/or physical or physiological disturbances, that was attributed to what is commonly known as "the UFO phenomenon" at any time during the confrontation, the reporting process, the investigation or the publicity surrounding the statement.

■ SVL REPORTS ■

Submission of Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief, Wim VAN UTRECHT; Kronenburgstraat 110, B-2000 Antwerpen Belgium.

The Editorial Board will be pleased to receive contributions from all parts of the world.

Since SVL is a non-profit organization, authors will not receive a fee for their contribution. When their manuscript is accepted for publication, they will receive two free copies of the published SVL Report that carries their contribution. Contributing authors receive one free copy.

Content

To submit a paper to the SVL Editorial Board is to imply that it presents the result of significant original research or some new ideas or data not previously published; that it is

not under consideration for publication elsewhere; and that if accepted it will not be published elsewhere in English, until after it has been published by SVL.

SVL will consider for publication:

■ Case studies

The primary purpose of any scientific study of UFO reports must be to identify the stimulus behind the report and the process(es) which may have deformed it.

For that reason SVL will publish detailed case histories (or selected aspects of a case) including those where the investigator(s) did not find a satisfactory explanation in spite of their in-depth inquiries.

Priority will be given to cases where physical evidence is put forward.

Special instructions for case studies are given on pp. 7-10 of this newsletter.

■ Contributions concerned with possible stimuli

I.e. any information about natural phenomena or man-made objects that can help in solving the remaining percentage of problematic cases.

■ Contributions concerned with psycho-sociological aspects

I.e. any information that may contribute to a better understanding of the perception and reporting process, the sociology behind the phenomenon as well as the psychological implications. In short: the complete set of human factors surrounding an anomalous claim.

■ Catalogues

Authors of catalogues do not necessarily have to follow the page order detailed on p. 6

If desired, the "Abstract" can be kept very short, the "Conclusion" can be omitted and the "References" can be arranged otherwise.

■ Descriptions of investigative techniques

Including any technical information that may help in the evaluation of cases where physical evidence is put forward.

It is essential that each manuscript should cover only one well defined aspect of the UFO phenomenon.

Style and Presentation

Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced throughout, preferably in English to avoid time-consuming translations resulting in delay of publication.

Mathematical expressions may be either hand-written or type-written but no ambiguities should arise.

The language should be clear, sentences kept relatively short and to the point.

Words, acronyms and abbreviations which may not be familiar to most readers should be defined or spelled out the first time they are used.

The level of writing should be for a broad academic audience and the reasoning scientifically justified. Speculations should be restricted to a scientifically acceptable level.

The Editorial Board shall have the right to seek advice from referees on suitability for publication and may, on their recommendation, accept, seek revision of or reject manuscripts.

If the author's contribution is not in correct form at the outset,

changes in manuscript will have to be made during refereeing and editing, resulting in delay of publication.

The author will be sent proofs prior to publication, to be returned within one month of their receipt.

Page Order

The page order of the submitted manuscripts should be:

title page; abstract; text; acknowledgements; references; appendices; illustrations.

Manuscripts accepted for publication will be preceded by a "Preface", written by a member of the Editorial Board, putting the author's contribution in perspective within the aims and scope of the publication project.

TITLE PAGE

- The first page of the manuscript should bear:

  a) The title, concise but informative.

  b) A more detailed subtitle.

  c) The name of the author.

  d) The address to which all correspondence should be sent.

  e) The date (month and year) on which the draft was finished.

ABSTRACT

- The body of the manuscript should be preceeded by a summary.
  The "Abstract" should be about 2% of the length of the main text.

TEXT

- Aside from an "Introduction" and "Conclusion(s)", manuscripts should carry a central body divided into chapters in which the material (data) is presented and the method of collection and investigation is explained.

- Since it is desirable that all authors use a uniform terminology for descriptions and evaluations of UFO reports, they are asked to take note of SVL's position statement given on page 4 of this first newsletter.

For case studies consult the special instructions on pp. 7-10.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Provide clear drawings in black ink on a smooth, white surface and bear in mind that it may be necessary to reduce their size for publication in SVL Report.

- Photographs should be in the desired final size (max. 13 x 18 cm).
  Exceptionally, original photo prints will be enclosed with SVL Report (color prints included), namely in those instances where the greater part of the text discusses the concerned photograph(s). In these special instances the author is requested to lend us the negatives or to provide us with enough prints after a financial agreement is reached.

- Authors are asked to pay attention to the fact that, where permission is needed for publication of material included in a manuscript, it is their responsibility to acquire this prior to publication.

- Figures and graphs should be mentioned in the text and should also be numbered using arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3 etc...). On each figure should be written lightly in soft pencil: the top of the figure, name of the author and the figure number. A brief descriptive caption should be provided for each figure; these captions should be typed in sequence on a seperate page.

REFERENCES

- References to published literature should be quoted in the text in

brackets using arabic numerals or giving name of the author and year of publication.

- Numbered references should be arranged thus:

  (1) HAINES, Richard F.: "Uitdijende Lichtbollen", SVL Tijdschrift Vol. 4, No. 14 (April 1985), pp. 3-4

  (2) CONDON, Edward U.: Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects (Bantam Books, New york * Toronto * London - 1969)

- Name, Year references should be arranged in alphabetical order.
  For example:

  - CONDON, Edward U. (1969): Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects; Bantam Books, New York * Toronto * London

  - HAINES, Richard F. (1985): "Uitdijende Lichtbollen", SVL Tijdschrift Vol. 4, No. 14, pp. 3-4

Manuscript Pages

The pages should be numbered consecutively, beginning with the title page.

The number of pages is unlimited. A minimum of about 20 pages is envisaged.

* * *

Special Instructions for Case Studies

Introductory Note: The instructions detailed below apply to case studies in which only one sighting report, involving a single witness and a single sighting location, is presented.

When presenting a case that involved multiple witnesses or multiple sighting locations, the author should include the required information for all witnesses and all locations.

When discussing a series of different incidents simultaneously, authors do not have to abide by the page order given below.

Likewise, authors are free to choose their presentation when dealing with new information or follow-up investigations of older cases. Nevertheless, authors should bear in mind that not all readers of SVL Reports are familiar with the UFO literature. Every manuscript should be complete in itself.

But in general, when preparing case studies of hitherto unpublished UFO reports, authors are asked to abide by the order, numbering and titles recorded in the "Special Instructions for Case Studies".

I. TITLEPAGE

The first page of the report should bear:

a) The location and date of the reported sighting.

b) A title, informing the reader about the kind of phenomenon that was reported.

c) The date(s) of the on-site investigation(s) and / or interview(s).

d) The date the draft was finished.

e) The name(s) and address(es) of the author(s)

II. PRESENTATION OF THE CASE

The following questions should be fully answered:

- What were the circumstances in which the report came to light and how was the author informed about it ?

- Why was an in-depth investigation considered worthwhile ?

- What were the circumstances in which the investigation took place ? (How many times did the author visit the "sighting location" ? Were all known witnesses interviewed ? Were they interviewed seperately ? How co-operative were they ? Etc...)

III. THE SITE

A. Encyclopedic data of the town or village concerned. (Number of inhabitants, geology, industry, etc...)

B. Description of the sighting location. (What does the landscape look like? Are there other houses or buildings dings in the immediate surroundings ?)

Detailed maps and photographs of the site should accompany the report.

Indications on transparencies or captions in a seperately enclosed list should clarify the positions of observer and phenomenon.

The author should bear in mind that the present situation in the area may differ substantially from the situation at the time of the alleged sighting.

IV. THE WITNESS

A. State name, first name, current address, address at the time of the event, date and place of birth, family situation, profession, pursuits and hobbies of the witnesses.

B. State your personal impressions of the witness' integrity and the credibility of his claims.

Preferably, a psychological profile, compiled by a professional psychologist, should accompany the report.

Note: It is a condition of pubication that the full name and address of the witness involved is known to SVL. When desired the witness' name will not be mentioned in the published report. If the case is not already widely publicized, the identity of the person involved will not be revealed without his or her written permission. When permission is not given, initials will be used.

V. DATE AND TIME

- Explain how date and time of the reported event were determined.

- With the exception of dates which should be presented in the astronomical convention viz:

  1977 August 06,

  no rigid rules concerning notation or abbreviation need be observed by authors, but each paper should be self consistent as to symbols and units, which should all be properly defined.

- Times should be presented in local time or Universal Time (UT). Be sure to indicate which one you are using.

  In conformity with astronomical standards the 24 hour clock should be used.

  Preferably, times should be written thus:

  22 h 15 m (21 h 15 m UT)

  or 22.15 h (21.15 h UT)

VI. SCENARIO OF THE EVENTS ACCORDING TO THE WITNESS

A. The beginning of the sighting

- What was the witness doing ?

- How was his attention drawn towards the phenomenon ?

B. The course of the sighting

- When possible, divide the sighting into different phases. Mention the estimated time that elapsed between each phase and give a detailed description of the phenomenon observed, using the expressions given by the witness, preferably quoting from a taped interview.

- Explain how durations and co-ordinates were obtained and which instruments were used to measure them (chronometer, theodolite, compass, etc...).

- One or more sketches of the phenomenon, drawn by the witness should accompany the report. Authors are advised to lend the witness proper material which provides clear photocopies. The surface for the sketch should be white with only the name of the witness written some distance underneath it.
  At no time, during or after the interview, should the author/investigator try to correct the witness' drawing.

C. The end of the sighting

- Also mention what the witness did immediately after the sighting.

VII. VERIFIABLE EVIDENCE

Verifiable evidence such as photographs, physical disturbances and physiological effects that may or may not back up the story told by the witness, should be carefully analysed. Where possible and when necessary, SVL will act as an intermediary in seeking competent persons for the examination and evaluation of the evidence.

VIII. UNVERIFIABLE EVIDENCE

Secondary effects or evidence that was mentioned by the witness but was not traceable by the author (because of their temporal duration and absence of a detailed report written by an investigator who did have a chance to check the evidence) should be described, using the words of the witness or persons who witnessed these secondary effects.

IX. OBSERVATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Astronomical situation

Authors who are not trained in handling astronomical data should write to the Associate Editor for information and free sky maps.

His address:

Ronny BLOMME
Pierre Curielaan 45, bus 4
B-1050 BRUSSEL
Belgium.

Since the astronomical situation may be of crucial importance in the evaluation of a case, this should be done prior to submission of the manuscript.

B. Meteorological situation

For Belgian cases write to:

Koninklijk Meteorologisch Instituut
Ringlaan 3
B-1180 BRUSSEL
Belgium.

For Dutch cases write to:

Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut
Wilhelminalaan 10
Postbus 201
NL-3730 AE DE BILT
Holland.

C. Summary

Summarize all relevant data from III B, IX A and IX B and compare to the account given by the witness in VI A, VI B and VI C.

X. EVALUATION

State your opinion on the credibility

of the witness, the coherence of his story and the weight of the evidence.

XI. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

Check and comment upon all scientifically acceptable explanations for the stimulus behind the report.

If a logical explanation is not found, refrain from further speculation.

XII. CONCLUSION

Stress the most striking aspects that characterize the case.

XIII. APPENDICES

Add photographs and maps of the sighting location, sketch(es) made by the witness (or clear copies), sky map(s), weather report(s) , photocopies of press coverage as well as personal correspondence (not for publication) concerning the case.

* * *

SVL NEWSLETTER

Instructions for Letters

In order to be accepted for publication, letters should be to the point and should relate directly to actions taken by SVL or to material published by SVL.

Letters of more than 3 pages (size A4) should preferably be arranged as a short paper.

The Editorial Board assumes the right to apply the 50% rule if deemed appropriate - i.e. a letter commenting on a previous letter is limited to 50% of the number of words of the original letter: a reply from the original author may then use only 50% of the number of words of the commenting letter, and so on.

All correspondence should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief:

Wim VAN UTRECHT
Kronenburgstraat 110
B-2000 ANTWERPEN
Belgium.

With special thanks to Hilary EVANS, Kris DERBOVEN and Jan VERHEYEN